

apb FORUM

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COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENT SURVEY COMPLETED

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BACKGROUND - For approximately two years the Area Planning Board and its consulting staff have been engaged in efforts to establish a structural basis for the delivery of needed urban services in the County. Initially, these efforts took the form of dividing the County into seven service areas. The plan was to organize a Council of Government (COG) for each area which would provide the structural basis for cooperative, voluntary coordination of selective service programs. To implement this plan, various data were compiled for each service area showing such factors as population, age distribution, home ownership, sewerage and water treatment capacities, solid waste daily tonnage, and so on. Meetings were set with elected and appointed officials from the various units of government within each area. At these meetings the data relating to the area and to its service needs were reviewed. In addition, the COG concept was presented as one of the more acceptable methods by which these needs could be met.

PROGRESS TO DATE - While not dramatic, these efforts have produced concrete results. The Loxahatchee COG, established in 1970, during the development stage of the Area Planning Board's COG work plan, continues to function very effectively. In addition to a successful program to bring threats to water and other natural resources of the area under control, the COG has recently undertaken review of such other service needs as recreation and road systems. A new COG in Service Area Four was formed in 1971: the South Central Coastal Area Council of Government. The major thrust of the initial activities of this COG is in the area of solid waste disposal.

While these results are encouraging, it was felt that the COG-service area program had not achieved the general acceptance throughout the County that had been hoped for. In an effort to revive interest in the program, a questionnaire was developed which asked for assistance from the County's units of local government in determining what future course of action, if any, the APB should take. These questionnaires were sent to each municipality and to Board of County Commissioners.

QUESTIONNAIRE DESIGN - The questionnaire was designed to elicit two types of input: service area boundaries, which

from the beginning had been presented as tentative; and specific service needs. Eleven specific services were listed: water, sewerage, solid waste disposal, transportation (bus, rail, etc.), roads, housing, land use (Planning, density control, etc.) police, fire, manpower planning and development, and recreation. In addition, the questionnaire provided columns for four different types of COG configurations: one county-wide COG; two COGs - one for the coastal area and one for the Glades area; three COGs - one from West Palm Beach north, one from Lake Worth south, and one for the Glades area; and the original seven COG-service areas. Spaces for "no COG" and "other" were also provided. Each unit of government was asked to place a check mark in the row corresponding to each service under the column corresponding to each of the several COG, no COG, and other categories. With this information the APB could assess several important considerations: (1) was the COG-service area concept acceptable or not; (2) if acceptable, were there significant differences between the type of COG configuration deemed most desirable for given services; and (3) were there any significant differences between the larger and the smaller units of government with respect to the COG-service area program.

QUESTIONNAIRE RESULTS - Two questionnaires were sent to each municipality — one to the chief elected official and one to the chief administrative officer. Questionnaires were sent to each County Commissioner and to the County Administrator. Twenty five or 68% of the municipalities returned questionnaires. Of these, two were blank — those municipalities not wanting to take a position; another contained input on only two service items, with the remainder of the form left blank. One municipality returned two questionnaires. No forms were returned by the County Commission or its Administrator.

Analysis of the data indicates solid backing for the general COG-service area concept. Seventy seven per cent of the responses favored one or another of the COG configurations; 18% favored no COGs and 5% suggested other alternatives — most of which involved cooperative efforts, but not within the COG structure.

Very little consensus emerged, however, as to which specific

type of COG would best serve the County's needs. Of the 78% favoring the COG approach: 28% favored a single countywide COG; 5% favored two COGs; 19% favored three; and 46% favored seven COGs. One per cent suggested four COGs and 1% favored six COGs.

This lack of consensus can be partially explained by the fact that the respondents favored different COG configurations for different services. In general, the one COG approach was favored for transportation and roads. Seven COGs were favored for water, sewerage, police, fire and recreation. Three or fewer COGs were favored for solid waste disposal, housing and manpower planning. Land use planning was split evenly between those who favored seven COGs and those who favored three or fewer. There was also a distribution by service of the 18% who chose the "no COG" category. Four per cent felt that no COG was needed for solid waste disposal; water and sewerage received approximately 10% no COG responses; transportation and roads 15%; and the remaining services received between 20 and 25%.

In addition to the distribution of responses by type of service,

the data showed a definite split between the preferences of the smaller municipalities and those of the larger ones. Of the 154 responses recorded by municipalities with a total 1971 estimated population of less than 5,000; 136 (88%) favored some form of COG; 11 (7%) favored no COGs; and 7 (5%) suggested other alternatives. On the other hand, of the 93 responses recorded by municipalities with populations in excess of 5,000: 55 (59%) favored some form of COG; 33 (36%) favored no COGs; and 5 (5%) suggested other alternatives. Clearly, the smaller municipalities are more interested in the COG concept than are the larger ones.

Finally, the COG concept provides a vehicle whereby communities can voluntarily join together for specific programs, yet it does not create an additional level of government. A member unit of government need not participate in all of a COGs programs. Those programs in which it does choose to participate must be approved by the unit's elected governing body. This can be a slow and cumbersome process at times, but it does guarantee the integrity of the existing governmental system.

COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENT AREAS						
SERVICES	One COG	Two COGs	Three COGs	Seven COGs	Other (Please Describe)	No COG
Water						
Sewerage						
Solid Waste Disposal						
Transportation (Bus, Rail, etc.)						
Roads						
Housing						
Land Use (Planning, Density Controls, etc.)						
Police						
Fire						
Manpower Planning & Development						
Recreation						
Other						

Name of Person Completing This Form _____ City _____

SAMPLE OF COG QUESTIONNAIRE

RECOMMENDED ACTION - Several courses of action are available for implementing the COG-service area program in Palm Beach County. Efforts to implement the original seven COG-service area plan could be continued. In view of the fact that less than 50% of the questionnaire respondents felt that this was the appropriate structure, this may not be the best alternative.

Another alternative would be to establish a Palm Beach County COG, and set up within this single COG various service committees. These committees could be further broken down on the basis of whatever geographical configuration appeared most desirable. For example, the transportation committee might be county-wide, while the recreation committee might be broken down into a large number of geographical regions.

Another alternative would be to establish a single county-wide COG, with three regional committees — one for West Palm Beach north, one for Lake Worth south, and one for the Glades area. These regional committees could be further broken down on the basis of various service areas within the region.

There are of course, other alternatives. But the second and third ones listed above appear to come closest to the sentiments expressed by those responding to the questionnaire. That is, they provide a COG which is county-wide; but which also includes enough flexibility to be adjusted for specific services within specific, less than county-wide, geographical regions. Either approach would do much to stem the tide toward consolidation; and either would provide a powerful mechanism for obtaining federal and-or state funds.

**COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS SURVEY RESULTS
(FOR MUNICIPALITIES UNDER 5,000 POPULATION)**

SERVICES	N = 100 % *	One COG		Two COGs		Three COGs		Seven COGs		Other		No COG	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Water	14	4	.29	1	.07	2	.14	6	.43			1	.07
Sewerage	14	1	.07			4	.29	8	.57	1	.07		
Solid Waste Disposal	15	2	.13	1	.07	5	.33	6	.40	1	.07		
Transportation (Bus, Rail, etc.)	12	6	.50	1	.08	2	.17	1	.08	1	.08	1	.08
Roads	13	7	.54	1	.08	2	.15	2	.15			1	.08
Housing	13	5	.38			1	.08	4	.31	1	.08	2	.15
Land Use (Planning, Density Controls, etc.)	14	2	.14			3	.21	6	.43	1	.07	2	.14
Police	14	2	.14	1	.07	1	.07	10	.71				
Fire	14	2	.14	1	.07	2	.14	9	.64				
Manpower Planning & Development	13	5	.38			1	.08	3	.23	1	.08	3	.23
Recreation	12	4	.33					7	.58			1	.08
Other	2							1	.5	1	.5		

* The number of responses recorded for various services varies due to blanks left by some of the respondents.

Note: One municipality suggested four COG's; another six. This data is not computed in the table above.

**COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS SURVEY RESULTS
(FOR MUNICIPALITIES WITH 5,000 AND OVER POPULATION)**

SERVICES	N = 100 % *	One COG		Two COGs		Three COGs		Seven COGs		Other		No COG	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Water	8	2	.25			1	.12	3	.38			2	.25
Sewerage	8	1	.12	1	.12	1	.12	3	.38			2	.25
Solid Waste Disposal	9	2	.22			2	.22	2	.22	2	.22	1	.11
Transportation (Bus, Rail, etc.)	8	3	.38			1	.12	1	.12	1	.12	2	.25
Roads	7	3	.43	1	.14	1	.14					2	.29
Housing	8			1	.12	2	.25	2	.25			3	.38
Land Use (Planning, Density Controls, etc.)	10	1	.10			2	.20	2	.20	2	.20	3	.30
Police	9	1	.11					2	.22			6	.67
Fire	9					1	.11	3	.33			5	.56
Manpower Planning & Development	8					1	.12	4	.50			3	.38
Recreation	8					1	.12	4	.50			3	.38
Other	1											1	.10

* The number of responses recorded for various services varies due to blanks left by some of the respondents.



PLANNING NEWS

APB CERTIFIED BY HUD

The Area Planning Board has recently received notification from the Department of Housing and Urban Development regarding the Area Planning Board's eligibility to perform areawide planning functions. The notification states that the Area Planning Board has been certified for the 1972-1973 fiscal year as an adequate areawide planning organization; and further states that the Area Planning Board through its 1972-1973 Comprehensive Plan is carrying out adequate long range comprehensive planning for the Palm Beach County area.

This certification has county wide significance; in that Area Planning Board certification enables the municipalities in Palm Beach County to maintain their eligibility to apply for federal funding assistance. This funding assistance includes monies available for water and sewer projects, parks and open space improvements and acquisitions, as well as other projects eligible for federal funding. The Area Planning Board stands ready at any time to assist any governmental body or citizens group in their efforts to apply for federal funding for their projects and to provide planning assistance as well.

APB IMPLEMENTS HUD GUIDELINES

Recently the Area Planning Board has been questioned by a local minority civic club and its supporters regarding a housing study project that was initiated under the 1971-1972 planning program. As a result of these questions, an investigation was conducted by the Office of Economic Opportunity. Following the investigation, the Area Planning Board was cleared of all charges made against it. Three recommendations were made, however, by the Office of Economic Opportunity regarding; (1) The degree of citizen involvement in Area Planning Board activities, (2) The meeting times of the Area Planning Board limiting citizen involvement, and (3) The Area Planning Board's lacking an affirmative plan for equal employment opportunity. In response to these comments, the Area Planning Board has initiated the formation of a Housing Advisory Committee that will hold evening meetings and have as its members representatives from different races and various economic levels in the county. As requested by the Office of Economic Opportunity, and utilizing HUD guidelines, an "Affirmative Action Program for Equal Employment Opportunity" has been drafted by the Area Planning Board staff and submitted to HUD for approval. This program sets the employee hiring policies of the Area Planning Board to provide equal opportunity for employment to all qualified persons regardless of sex, age, race, national origin or religious belief.

Preliminary information indicates that these actions on the part of the Area Planning Board are satisfactory as far as OEO-HUD is concerned. Funding for the 1972-1973 budget year, which was being delayed pending the investigation and Area Planning Board actions, is expected to be resumed in the immediate future. This will enable the Area Planning Board to continue its on-going program for long range comprehensive planning.

HOUSING STUDY NEARS COMPLETION

The Area Planning Board staff has recently completed the final draft of a comprehensive housing study for Palm Beach County, produced under the 1971-1972 "701" program. This study addresses itself to the total housing needs of Palm Beach County, with emphasis on the low and moderate income persons housing problems. Information included in this report includes: an overview of the present housing market in Palm Beach County in regard to dwelling unit construction, unit availability and price ranges; an analysis of local housing authority activities; a demographic analysis of low-income areas and their ethnic concentrations; projections for long and short range housing needs by population projection; an overview of the migrant and farm labor housing situation and an analysis of publicly owned land that could be utilized for low cost housing sites. Conclusions and recommendations of this report include: encouraging the formation of housing authorities in areas where none exist, for the purpose of expediting low-cost housing construction in areas where it is needed; establishing a notification program by which private contractors and organizations can be made aware of government funding assistance programs for low-cost housing construction; making low and moderate income persons aware of federal programs by which they can improve the quality of their housing and "earmarking" suitable parcels of land for future low-cost housing development by housing authorities or private interest low-cost housing organizations.

It is intended that the 1972-1973 "701" Housing program will concentrate on specific areas of the overall housing situation identified in the 1971-72 study. These analyses will be accomplished with the aid of a planning consultant and the cooperation of the newly formed Area Planning Board Housing Advisory Committee. The actual areas to be analyzed in depth have not yet been chosen, but a decision is to be made soon.

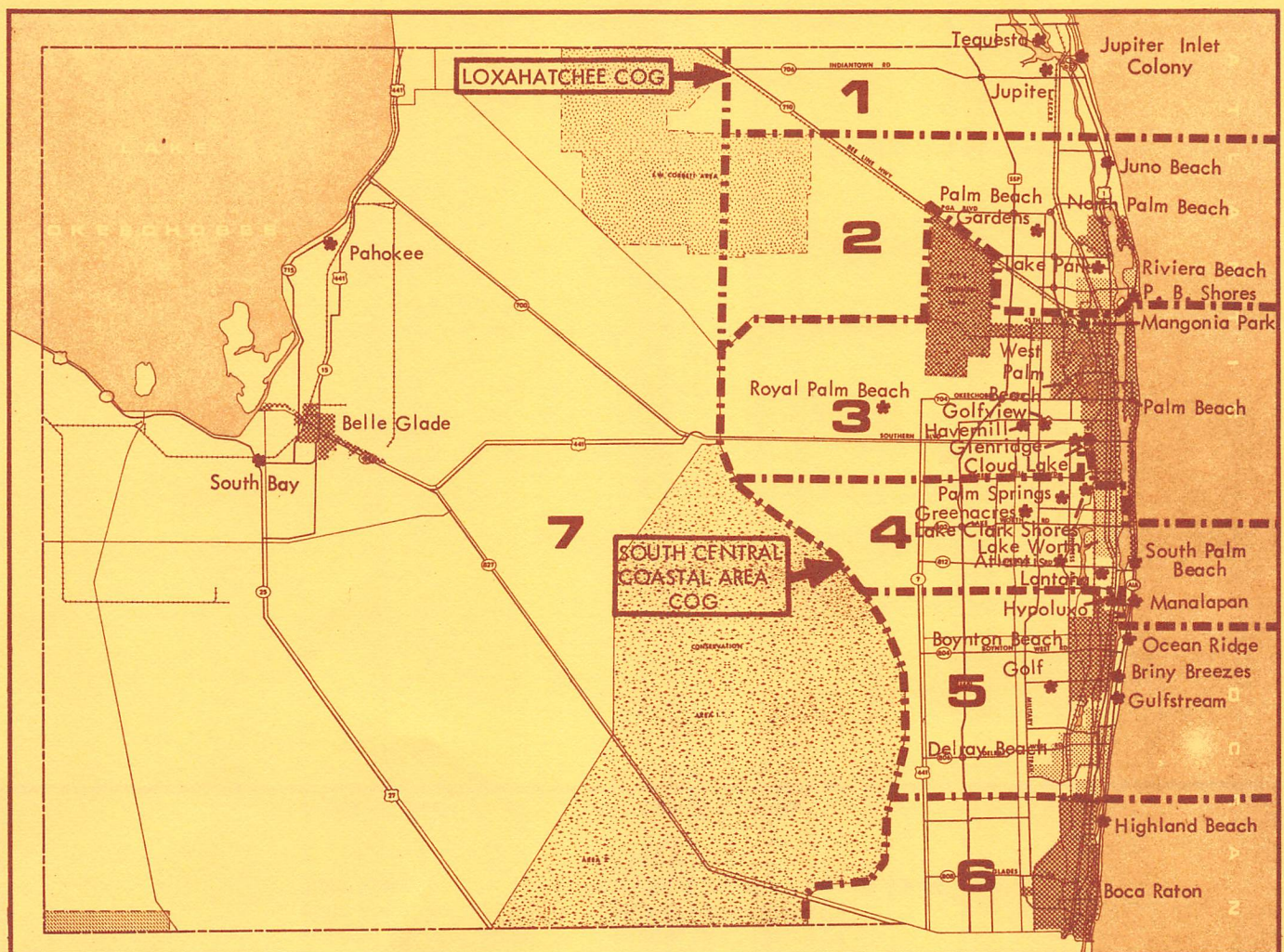
FLOOD PLAIN STUDY COMPLETED

As part of the 1971-1972 Comprehensive Plan (701) program, the Area Planning Board has completed and distributed its "Flood Plain Study and Model Flood Plain Ordinance" report. This report concerns itself with the flooding problems of the eastern coastal areas of Palm Beach County and offers methods by which the more serious effects of heavy flooding could be minimized or avoided. Portions of the report include: a review of past flooding situations in Palm Beach County; previous flood studies conducted by the Corps of Engineers and local engineering firms; an analysis of existing codes, ordinances and regulations which, provide for protection from flood damage to property; and proposed model regulatory controls to combat flood damage in the urbanized areas of Palm Beach County. Included in these proposed controls are: a Model Flood Hazard Zoning district, Flood proofing criteria, subdivision criteria and methods by which coastline flooding may be minimized. Copies of this report are available at the Area Planning Board offices.

SUMMARY - In view of the strong interest in the COG-service area concept indicated by the questionnaire data, further effort to develop such a structural basis for the delivery of services appears justified. In addition to these data, other factors support this conclusion.

First, consolidation is in the wind. A fifty member study commission is being set up in the County to study the feasibility and desirability of consolidating governmental functions and-or structures in the interest of greater economy and efficiency. A similar commission is being developed at the State level. This commission will study local government finances and structures. In this latter category the commission will consider the possibility of structural and-or functional consolidation. A strong and effective COG movement in the County would do much to offset the need for such consolidation.

Second, there are definite, concrete benefits to be gained from the development of one or more COGs. Since a COG is not-for-profit corporate entity, it can receive funds and provide services. Many federal programs require a minimum population base before application for program funds can be made. For example, the recently funded Intergovernmental Personnel Act requires a minimum population base of 50,000 before the federal government will accept application for funding training programs for public employees. At present, only one municipality in the County — West Palm Beach — could qualify independently for such funds. A COG with a combined population of 50,000 or more would also qualify, and might even receive preferential consideration. In addition to federal programs, a COG offers an opportunity for communities to provide services through combined effort which might not otherwise be possible on an independent basis.



SERVICE AREAS AND COUNCILS OF GOVERNMENTS MAP — PALM BEACH COUNTY, FLORIDA

SURVEY RESULTS - TABULAR FORM

Presented on the following page are the results of the Service Area Survey in tabular form, with the number of responses listed in the "N" columns and the percentage of response as compared to the total listed in the "%" columns.

The different COG configurations, favored by the polled municipalities to have responsibility for the varied services listed, are shown under the one COG, two COG, three COG, etc. columns respectively. All other data is self explanatory.

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